

# The Legal & Ethical Environment of Business

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Syllabus  
Spring 2021



HACKER.



the social network

The Professor reserves the right to make any additions, revisions, or other changes to this Syllabus.

# Description of the Course



**Are you Team Zuckerberg or Team Winklevoss?** Did Mark Zuckerberg really betray his best friend and business partner, or did Eduardo Saverin have it coming to him? This term we will explore the legal and ethical environments of business firms through the lens of the award-winning film “The Social Network.” Among other things, we will identify the main sources of law that apply to most business firms, including state, federal, and international law. We will then study the common law, including contracts and torts. (It turns out the Winklevoss’ original lawsuit against Mark Zuckerberg was based entirely on common law claims, like breach of contract and fraudulent misrepresentation!) Next, we will explore “the law of ideas” or intellectual property rights and see why this area of law is so essential for modern-day business firms. We will then study “corporate governance” from both a legal and ethical perspective as well as the main forms of doing business. Last but not least, we will conclude this course by comparing/contrasting civil and criminal liability and exploring strategic aspects of civil and criminal cases.

[Pictured above: screenshot of Facebook’s original home page, circa 2004.]

# Course Materials; Internet Connection



**Movie:** We will be watching the award-winning film “The Social Network,” which is now available on Netflix and other on-demand movie streaming services.

**Readings:** We will be using the following textbook: Sean Melvin, “The Legal Environment of Business.” Any edition of this textbook is fine; no Connect code is required. Also, since we will be discussing the events depicted in “The Social Network” in great depth this semester, we will also be using the following case study: “Facebook Law: A Documentary Companion to The Social Network,” which is available online here <https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/facebook-101-documentary-companion-social-network-1>. Lastly, the Professor will post some supplementary reading materials on Canvas (Webcourses@UCF). These materials will consist of book chapters, law cases, legislative materials, and law review articles.

**Internet Connection:** Students will need access to a reliable Internet connection this semester, and your grade will suffer without such access because all the assignments, lectures, and supplementary readings in this course will be posted on Canvas (Webcourses@UCF).

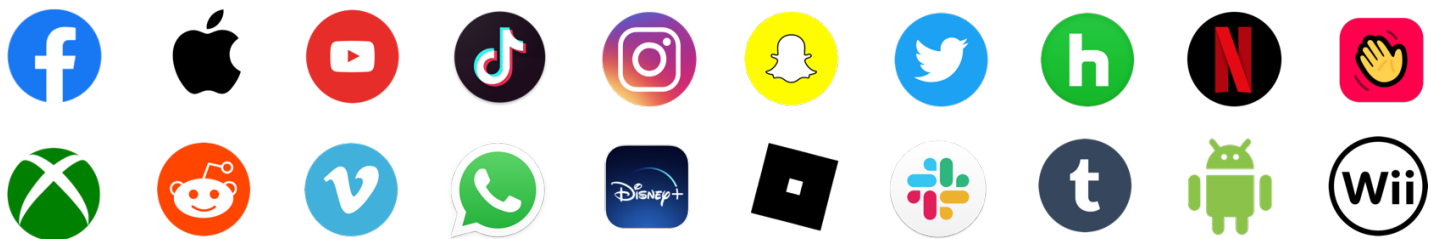
[Pictured above: Poster art for the movie “The Social Network,” circa 2010.]



- **Module A = Business and the Constitution** (in this opening module, we will identify some important constitutional doctrines and provisions, including the commerce clause, the free speech clause, and the due process clause)
- **Module B = Sources of Law; Theories of Ethics** (in this second module, we will identify the main sources of law, including state, federal, and international law, and we will also explore the complex relation between law and ethics)
- **Module C = The Common Law** (in this third module, we will explore two major areas of our “common law tradition”: contracts and torts)
- **Module D = The Law of Ideas** (in this fourth module, we will study various types of intellectual property rights, including copyrights, patents, trade secrets, and trademarks)
- **Module E = Corporate Governance** (in this module, we will study the main forms of doing business, including sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies, and private and public corporations)
- **Module F = Civil & Criminal Cases** (in this last module, we will identify the main stages of business litigation; compare/contrast civil and criminal liability; and explore some strategic aspects of litigation, such as the all-important decision whether to settle or go to trial)



# Course Schedule & Activities



<b>Module A</b> “Business & the Constitution” (opens on Tuesday, Jan. 19)	Attend Lecture #1 (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Jan. 19; watch “The Social Network”; read Chapter 2 of the Melvin textbook as well as Chapter 2 of Facebook Law documentary companion; review the supplementary materials in Module A; complete Discussion Post #1 and Quiz #1 by Monday, Feb. 1 (11:59PM).
<b>Module B</b> “Sources of Law; Theories of Ethics” (opens on Tuesday, Feb. 2)	Attend Lecture #2 (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Feb. 2; read Chapters 1 and 5 of the Melvin textbook as well as Chapter 1 of Facebook Law documentary companion; review the supplementary materials in Module B; complete Discussion Post #2 and Quiz #2 by Monday, Feb. 15 (11:59PM).
<b>Module C</b> “The Common Law” (opens on Tuesday, Feb. 16)	Attend Lecture #3 (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Feb. 16; read Chapters 6 and 9 of the Melvin textbook and Chapter 6 of the Facebook Law companion book; review the supplementary materials in Module C; complete Discussion Post #3 & Quiz #3 by Monday, Mar. 1 (11:59PM).
<b>Module D</b> “The Law of Ideas” (opens on Tuesday, Mar. 2)	Attend Lecture #4 (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Mar. 2; read Chapters 23 & 24 of the Melvin textbook as well as Chapter 3 of Facebook Law documentary companion; review the supplementary materials in Module D; complete Discussion Post #4 & Quiz #4 by Monday, Mar. 22 (11:59PM).
<b>Module E</b> “Corporate Governance” (opens on Tuesday, Mar. 23)	Attend Lecture #5 (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Mar. 23; read Chapters 13, 14, 15, and 16 of the Melvin textbook as well as Chapter 4 of Facebook Law documentary companion; review the supplementary materials in Module E; complete Discussion Post #5 & Quiz #5 by Monday, Apr. 5 (11:59PM).
<b>Module F</b> “Settle or Go To Trial?” (opens on Tuesday, Apr. 6)	Attend Lecture #6 (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Apr. 6; read Chapters 3 and 4 of the Melvin textbook as well as Chapter 5 of Facebook Law documentary companion; review the supplementary materials in Module F; complete Discussion Post #6 & Quiz #6 by Monday, Apr. 26 (11:59PM).

# Course Assignments



During the first week of this course, the Professor will assign a two-part “Academic Activity.” The Academic Activity is required by UCF but will only be worth 1% of your grade. The remainder of your grade will be based on based on the following set of assignments and will be weighted as follows:

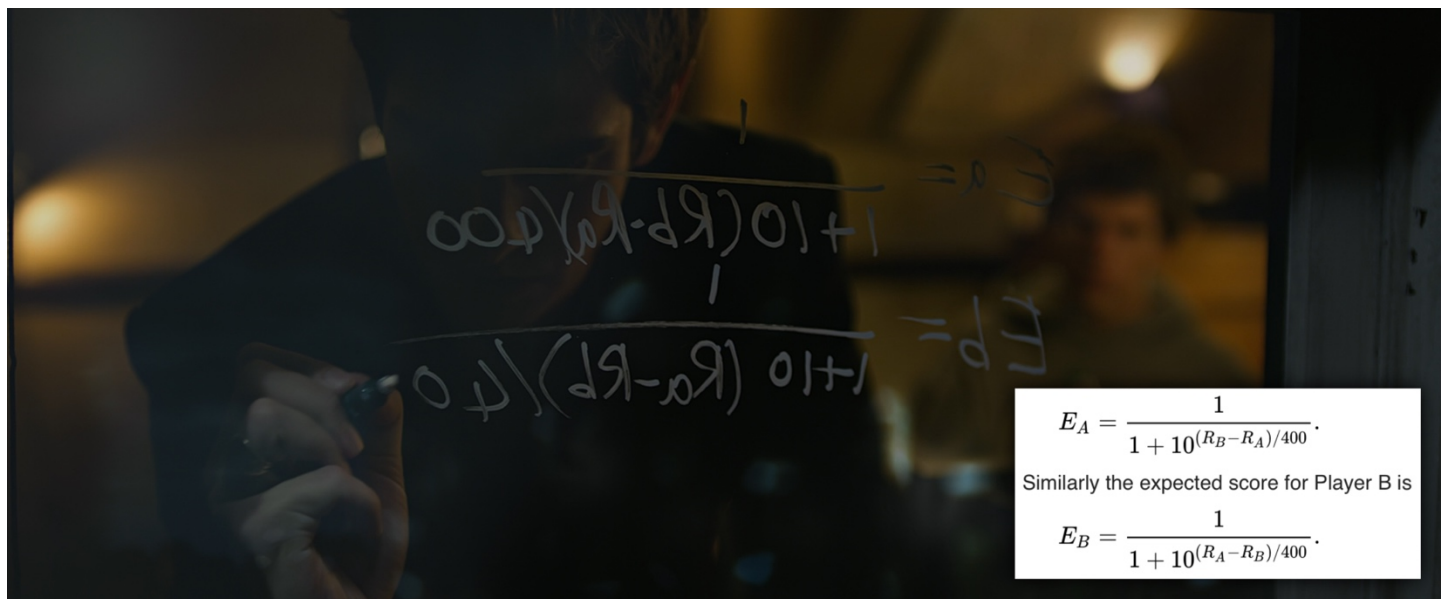
6 QUIZZES	6 DISCUSSION POSTS	FINAL PROJECT
240 points (1/3 of the grade)	240 points (1/3 of the grade)	240 points (1/3 of the grade)

As mentioned on Page 4 of this Syllabus, this course will consist of six modules. The Professor will open a new module every two weeks or so, beginning with Module A on Tuesday, January 19, and each module will contain a quiz and discussion post, and each quiz and discussion post will then remain open for two weeks. Following the completion of the last module, the Professor will assign a Final Project. (The Final Project will be posted on Canvas (Webcourses@UCF) on Tuesday, Apr. 6, 2021, and will remain until Monday, Apr. 26 (11:59PM).)

[Pictured above: screenshot of Harvard College’s current honor code.]



# Boilerplate & Course Policies



**Cheating:** If a student is caught cheating in this course, they will receive an automatic F for the entire course. Cheating includes the use of Course Hero, Chegg, Quizlet, etc.

**Email:** Use the email function in Canvas if you have any questions or comments about the course. The Professor or one of his TAs (see page 11 of the Syllabus) will generally respond within 24 to 48 hours, excluding holidays and weekends. Also, be sure to always copy one of the TAs as follows:

- If you are in the 4:30 PM section, copy [oleksandr.kondrachuk@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:oleksandr.kondrachuk@Knights.ucf.edu).
- If you are in the 6:00 PM section, copy [BenRobMayo@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:BenRobMayo@Knights.ucf.edu).
- If you are in the 7:30 PM section, copy [Emilycurley@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:Emilycurley@Knights.ucf.edu).

**Legal Assistance:** The Professor is not authorized to provide legal counsel to his students. For legal advice, contact UCF's Office of Student Legal Services at [stulegal@ucf.edu](mailto:stulegal@ucf.edu).

**Makeup Policy:** Because of the massive size of this course (approx. 900 enrolled students), there will be absolutely no makeups or deadline extensions in this course. No exceptions!

**Office Hours:** Office hours will take place via Zoom every Wednesday from 5:00 to 6:00 PM.

**Students with Disabilities:** The University of Central Florida (UCF) and the Professor are committed to providing reasonable accommodations to all students with disabilities. Students who need a reasonable accommodation must first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). After registering with SAS, students who need a reasonable accommodation must also contact the Professor via email during the first week of class.

[Pictured above: screenshot of the Elo chess-ranking equation used to rank co-eds on Zuckerberg's 2003 "face-mash" website.]

# Grading Scale



GPA = Letter Grade	% Range	Points
4.00 = A	90 – 100	648 – 720
3.25 = B+	87 – 89.99	626.4 – 647.99
3.00 = B	80 – 86.99	576 – 626.39
2.50 = C+	77 – 79.99	554.4 – 575.99
2.00 = C	70 – 76.99	504 – 554.39
1.50 = D+	67 – 69.99	482.4 – 503.99
1.00 = D	60 – 66.99	432 – 482.39
0.00 = F	<60	<432

[Pictured above: Harvard College.]







# Map of Silicon Valley & Facebook's Corporate Headquarters (HQ1)



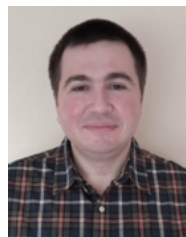
# Professor & TA Bios



Professor **F. E. Guerra-Pujol** attended college at UC Santa Barbara (#GauchoForLife), double-majoring in political philosophy and Spanish literature and graduating with Highest Honors. He then studied law at Yale. Before becoming a professor and devoting himself full-time to research and teaching, he practiced business law in San Juan, Puerto Rico, representing such clients as Banco Popular, Miller Brewing Company, and Procter & Gamble. The Professor is married to Sydja Robinson (#TeamJamaica) and is a father of four, including Adys Ann (pictured above).



**Emily Curley** is a graduate student in the MSA program and studying for the CPA. After completing her Master's degree, she will join Ernst & Young's audit practice. In her free time, she enjoys binge-watching TV shows and spending time at the beach.



**Oleksandr Kondrachuk** is currently an MBA student at UCF and has been accepted to the PhD Program in Accounting for Fall 2021. After completing his PhD, he plans to start working as an accounting professor. He enjoys reading and traveling.



**Ben Mayo** is a graduate of UCF, double majoring in Economics and Philosophy. He plans to follow in the Professor's fateful footsteps by attending law school next fall. Ask him who his favorite philosopher is ...



**Antonella Vitulli** is a junior, majoring in Accounting and Finance. Among other things, her favorite activities include watching documentaries, painting, yoga, and going to the beach.

[THE END]